

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 1442
By Dunn

A RESOLUTION to honor and commend Representative Russell Johnson on his meritorious service as a member of the General Assembly.

WHEREAS, it is fitting that the members of this Body should recognize those fellow legislators who have performed their duties with remarkable dexterity and unprecedented devotion and whose efforts to excel have brought substantial benefits to their respective communities and to this great State; and

WHEREAS, Representative Russell Johnson's illustrious career in the House of Representatives will come to an end at the adjournment sine die of the 104th General Assembly, as he has announced his retirement from this august Body; and

WHEREAS, Representative Johnson has for many years been a prominent and highly influential figure in the political, social, and civic lives of Loudon and Monroe counties, both emerging economic forces in the rapidly growing East Tennessee region; he has served his constituents in numerous capacities, always working diligently at his elected duties and expending the necessary effort to understand the opposing sides of complex issues; and

WHEREAS, in November of 2000, the good people of House District 21 in Loudon and Monroe counties evinced their great faith in the political and governmental capabilities of Russell Johnson by electing him as their representative to the General Assembly, a position in which he has performed admirably; and

WHEREAS, during his three terms and six years in the House of Representatives, Representative Johnson has been prominent as a dedicated and well-informed legislator who always votes his conscience; and

WHEREAS, Representative Johnson has dedicated his career away from the General Assembly to the practice of law; he is also the co-owner of a title company, and he previously served with probity and acumen as Loudon City Judge from 1998 to 2001; and

WHEREAS, in addition to being a highly respected attorney, Representative Johnson is a dynamic and aggressive participant in the legislative process and has earned the respect and admiration of his colleagues for the outstanding contributions he has made as Chairman of the Wildlife Subcommittee of the House Conservation and Environment Committee and Chairman of the Criminal Practice and Procedure Subcommittee of the House Judiciary Committee; and

WHEREAS, an avid outdoorsman and farm owner whose property has prevalent game populations, Russell Johnson has promoted youth involvement in outdoor sporting activities and worked to increase awareness of conservation and wildlife issues among the general public during his distinguished tenure as Chairman of the Wildlife Subcommittee; and

WHEREAS, he also serves as a member of the House Conservation Environment Committee and its Environment Subcommittee, the House Judiciary Committee and its Judicial Administration Subcommittee, the House Rules Committee, the Joint Select Committee on Children and Youth, and the Ad Hoc Committee on Ethics; and

WHEREAS, Russell Johnson is "green" in the best sense of the word and a true friend and stalwart defender of the environment, having distinguished himself in the realm of environmental conservation and preservation through his service with the Natural Resources Task Force of the American Legislative Exchange Council, Foothills Land Conservancy, Creek - N- Woods, Tennessee Conservation Voters, National Environmental Moot Court Team, Sierra Club, Tennessee Tourism Caucus, National Parks and Conservation Association, National Association of Sportsmen Legislators, Tennessee Wildlife Foundation, and Republicans for Environmental Progress; and

WHEREAS, a strong proponent of recycling and an equally strong opponent of litter, he has sponsored legislation to enact a mandatory beverage container deposit program or "bottle bill" in Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, deeply concerned about declining air quality in Tennessee and our nation's reliance on foreign oil, Representative Johnson has sponsored two pieces of landmark legislation to address these important issues: one to grant a sales tax exemption for the purchase of hybrid or alternative fuel vehicles, both of which produce significantly less air pollution than conventional combustion engines, and the other to provide tax incentives for the

production and use of ethanol, thus reducing the consumption of gasoline while stimulating this State's agricultural economy; and

WHEREAS, no stranger to awards and accolades, Representative Johnson has been honored numerous times for his heartfelt, and usually effective, advocacy for the preservation of our natural environment; he was honored as the Legislator Friend of the Environment by Tennessee Conservation Voters in both 2003 and 2004 and was named the Tennessee Wildlife Foundation's Legislator of the Year in 2004; and

WHEREAS, this singular gentleman was honored as Legislator of the Year by the County Officials Association of Tennessee in 2003 and has received the American Jurisprudence Award; and

WHEREAS, in 2003, Representative Johnson joined eight other rising political leaders from across the nation in serving as a delegate to the Arab Republic of Egypt and the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan during a political study program sponsored by the American Council of Young Political Leaders; this exemplary program provided him the once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to travel the countryside of both nations, interact and develop relationships with rising local and national leaders, business communities, and civic groups, and learn about the differences and similarities in government management as well as local culture and social issues; and

WHEREAS, he demonstrated his extensive knowledge of government and politics as an election observer in Macedonia with the International Republican Institute in 2004; and

WHEREAS, a gentleman who truly appreciates the responsibilities, as well as the privileges, of citizenship, Representative Russell Johnson is a valuable contributor to many civic, professional, and governmental organizations; he has rendered estimable service as a member of the Ft. Loudoun Historical Association, Tennessee Bar Association, Loudon County Chamber of Commerce, and American Quarter Horse Association and as a board member of the East Tennessee Development District, Loudon County chapter of the American Red Cross, and the Monroe County Chamber of Commerce; he previously served with distinction as President of both the Loudon Rotary Club and the Loudon County Bar Association; and

WHEREAS, Representative Johnson earned his Bachelor of Arts degree in History and Religion from Auburn University and received his Doctorate of Jurisprudence from the University of Tennessee College of Law; and

WHEREAS, in his all too rare free time, he enjoys the great outdoors by participating in various activities, including hiking and bicycling, and he loves to study geography and history, especially family history; and

WHEREAS, the son of proud parents Dr. Martha Russell Johnson and Lawrence Johnson, he has two sisters: Terry Johnson Sharpe and Laura Johnson Ball; and

WHEREAS, his many accomplishments aside, Russell Johnson is most appreciative of the love and companionship he shares with his wife, Erin, and their pets, Ralph the dog and Dimple the cat; they greatly miss the dearly departed Tucson; and

WHEREAS, Representative Johnson's announcement of his retirement from the General Assembly has greatly disappointed and disconcerted his fellow lawmakers, and his considerable talents and energies will be sorely missed by the good people of House District 21; and

WHEREAS, this Body finds it appropriate to bid farewell to our friend and colleague, Representative Russell Johnson; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED FOURTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we hereby honor Representative Russell Johnson on his meritorious service to the State of Tennessee and its environment as a member of the General Assembly.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we commend him for his countless contributions and many good works in service of the citizens of House District 21 and Loudon and Monroe counties.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we extend to Russell Johnson our best wishes for much success in his future endeavors.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation to Representative Russell Johnson as a token of our esteem.